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General Contractor

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
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I am a general contractor, and I've been licensed here in Oregon for 12 years. Right now, lots of positive growth is occurring in the city, including all the expansion along the Willamette River's waterfront. This is very good for Portland, and it would be a terrible time to do anything to negatively impact our economy. The plan the EPA has just proposed to clean up contamination along the ten miles of the riverbed in this area could do that very thing. I know this is a designated Superfund Site and that plans to clean it up have been in the works for years. It concerns me that it's taken so long to come up with a plan. This plan is outdated before it's even started, and it isn't taking into account things that have happened to the river during that time.

Spending what the EPA has estimated will be from \$746 million to \$1.4 billion to dredge segments of the river bottom and truck away the contaminated soil to a landfill is unnecessary. If this process goes on for years or longer, it will disrupt commerce on the river, affect accessibility to the river for recreation and impact tourism along the waterfront. There are already traffic circulation problems there, and this would only make them worse. This is not something that Portland residents or business owners want. Not only would it lead to higher business taxes, something no Portland business owner needs, but it could also lead to re-contamination of the river during the process. Portland could better use the money to improve roads and sewers.

The EPA has not taken into consideration the information provided by a 2014 study of the river which showed that since the last study in 2004, contamination in the river was reduced by 40%. This wasn't because of any human intervention. It was simply the river's own natural restoration processes taking place over time. New sediment has covered up much of the old contaminated sediment so it is no longer a problem for the environment. I am concerned because EPA estimates regarding such projects in the past have been wrong and they could be wrong this time as well. Local Portland residents and business owners will pay the price for the proposed cleanup. There needs to be more local input into this process before the EPA moves forward to implement its plan. Many here believe that a less invasive approach is best and since we are the ones who must live with whatever plan is decided on, our views should be given more serious consideration.

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